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[1](#)B. BRASILIA 1140
[1](#)C. BRASILIA 1112
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[1](#)E. STATE 80039
[1](#)F. 08 BRASILIA 540

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Classified By: Charge D'Affaires Lisa Kubiske for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. In his September 21 introductory lunch with the Charge D'Affaires, Ambassador Piragibe Tarrago, the recently named Ministry of Exterior Relations (MRE) Under-Secretary for the newly created Middle Eastern and African Affairs portfolio, provided insight into Brazil's evolving development and policy objectives in each region. Ambassador Piragibe (he is universally known by his first name at MRE) discussed potential areas for cooperation with the USG in Africa, citing Lusophone countries as a model, and spoke more generally about the challenges of being an emerging donor nation. He identified Israel-Palestine as Brazil's key objective in the Middle East, praised recent USG efforts to initiate further dialogue in the region, and outlined Brazil's lines of assistance to the Palestinian Authority. Coming to his position after three years as Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Piragibe expects to continue dialogue with high-level American counterparts on key issues. Brazil's desire to be a player in the Middle East and Africa, combined with Piragibe's lack of strong views on most issues, provides us an opportunity to develop further U.S.-Brazil cooperation in both regions. End summary.

African Priorities

[1](#)2. (C) As Brazil ramps up its diplomatic presence in Africa, Piragibe and Ambassador Fernando Simas Magalhaes, director of the MRE Africa department, spoke mostly about the development cooperation component of their emerging missions. (Note: The GOB insists that it is not a donor, but rather cooperates with other countries. End note.) Piragibe said the vast majority of bilateral cooperation in Africa would have a direct economic development focus and would be carried out by Brazilian ministry officials -- particularly from the Agriculture, Health, and Energy ministries and related institutes -- who would be contracted through MRE's Agencia Brasileira de Cooperacao (ABC). Piragibe sees this model as strategically more effective for Brazil but admitted it would cause a constraint on resources at the ministries which could limit bilateral assistance potential downrange. He praised a

cotton production project in Mali as an example of a project that Brazil wants to prioritize: one that spurs both economic development and potential Brazilian imports of agricultural products.

¶3. (C) When asked about anti-corruption and democratization programs, Ambassador Simas in particular downplayed Brazilian interest, saying that Brazil did not generally try to address such overarching issues in its cooperation programs. He added, however, that Brazil was looking at ways to strengthen election-related institutions, rather than participating directly in election monitoring. (Comment: This is almost certainly an effort to maintain a plausible program on democratic strengthening, while avoiding the difficulties it encountered in its tentative foray into election observation in Zimbabwe last year (ref F).) Piragibe said that Brazil's contributions to humanitarian assistance are generally purchased locally or in neighboring countries, and Simas mentioned in response to ref A that a donation to Kenya had been made recently. Post is working to confirm the details of the contribution.

Areas for U.S.- Brazil Cooperation?

¶4. (C) Despite somewhat differing priorities and delivery mechanisms, Piragibe and Simas saw considerable room for U.S.-Brazilian cooperation in Africa, citing Lusophone countries as models. Piragibe believed that complementary American and Brazilian projects in Mozambique (see ref D) could be broadly replicated in other countries where health and agriculture are primary objectives. They also saw opportunities to partner more closely in institutional capacity building, at least in Lusophone Africa, with Guinea-Bissau mentioned as a country where we can expand

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current U.S.-Brazilian cooperation in order to develop the capacity of the local parliament, judiciary, and core ministries. Brazil is eager to spread beyond its traditional Lusophone sphere, and sees ethanol as the primary vehicle for spreading Brazilian expertise and influence to non-traditional, often English-speaking countries. (Piragibe added that efforts to develop Brazilian ethanol technology in Africa with EU financing will benefit primarily Southern African countries with underdeveloped sugar industries -- such as Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, and Democratic Republic of the Congo.)

Israel-Palestine

¶5. (C) In the Middle East, Piragibe identified Israel-Palestine dispute resolution as Brazil's primary interest. He cited Brazil's large (heavily Christian) Lebanese-Syrian community as a motivating factor, and remarked that President Lula's government has been especially interested in becoming a player on the issue due to the support it receives from the Brazilian Arab community. He praised the new U.S. approach to region, consistent with the messaging in ref C, especially Special Envoy Mitchell's outreach to Syria. Piragibe said that Israel and Syria had recently used Brazil to pass messages, suggesting that Brazil is trusted in the region as a disinterested third party. He noted the planned November visit of Israeli President Shimon Peres as part of Brazil's ongoing effort to cultivate ties with the region. He said that Lula does not plan to travel to the Middle East in the near future, and will go to Israel and Palestine "only if he believes a visit will be helpful to the peace process." Piragibe and Simas believed that the \$10 million promised to the Palestinian Authority (PA) in March had been authorized but not transferred. (Note: This message that does not square with what we have heard recently from the Senate or from MRE desk officers, who say that Congress never considered the funding and that Itamaraty never lobbied for it. End note.) Piragibe added that the

India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) trilateral mechanism is also being used to support the PA. IBSA is now building a gymnasium in Ramallah, he said, and has committed \$3 million to be spent on affordable housing in Gaza. MRE's humanitarian assistance wing, CG Fome, has also made contributions to the PA in the past year.

Bio Notes

¶6. (SBU) Ambassador Piragibe Tarrago, the new Under-Secretary for Political Affairs III, covering the Middle East and Africa, served most recently as Deputy Permanent Representative of Brazil at the United Nations (2006-2009). In our lunch, he expressed satisfaction with the level of bilateral consultation between the USG and Brazil in New York. He joined MRE in 1975 and has served mostly in economic positions, with ample experience as a trade agreement negotiator, including during the WTO Doha Round and the GATT Uruguay Round. He also formerly served as the MRE Director of the Economic Affairs Department. Ambassador Piragibe has not previously served in either Africa or the Middle East; his previous overseas postings were all in the Western Hemisphere (New York, Ottawa, Caracas) or Europe (London, Geneva). He speaks fluent English.

¶7. (U) The Under-Secretary for African and Middle Eastern Affairs position is a new one at MRE, dividing the former Asia, Africa and Middle East department. Under-Secretary for Political Affairs II Roberto Jaguaribe (ref B) remains in charge of East, Central, and South Asia, including Iran. Under-Secretary for Political Affairs I Vera Machado handles Europe, the United States, and Canada. Under-Secretary for South America Enio Cordeiro, his title notwithstanding, handles all of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Comment

¶8. (C) As one of Brazil's top-tier diplomats accustomed to working with senior U.S. officials, Ambassador Piragibe will want to continue engaging the United States as Brazil continues to craft its still nascent policies toward both the Middle East and Africa. Given his relative lack of experience in the region, Piragibe does not appear to have strongly formed opinions on certain critical issues, which

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may provide a window of opportunity for us. We will continue to coordinate with Ambassador Piragibe, the MRE Africa division under him, and relevant MRE development assistance departments about effective means of cooperation in Africa. In light of Brazil's growing presence and interest in Africa, its efforts to further develop commercial ties in the Middle East, and its determination to maintain a role in the Middle East peace process, post will seek opportunities for Piragibe to engage AF and NEA regarding USG priorities and interests. End comment.
KUBISKE